



U.S. Department of Justice

**Stephen J. Murphy
United States Attorney
Eastern District of Michigan**

*Suite 2001
211 West Fort Street
Detroit, Michigan 48226-3277
Fax: (313) 226-3561*

For Immediate Release:

Contact: Gina Balaya (313) 226-9758
Dawn Clenney - FBI (313) 237-4206
Greg Palmore - ICE (313) 446-3745

June 14, 2005

EVENT: Sentencing

Defendant: Mahmoud Youssef Kourani

Dearborn Man Sentenced in Conspiracy to Provide Support to Hizballah

Mahmoud Youssef Kourani, 34, formerly of Dearborn, Michigan and Yater, Lebanon was sentenced today in Detroit federal court to 54 months imprisonment, announced United States Attorney Stephen J. Murphy. Mr. Murphy was joined in the announcement by Daniel D. Roberts, Special Agent in Charge, Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and Brian Moskowitz, Special Agent in Charge, Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

Kourani pleaded guilty on March 1, 2005 to the charge of Conspiracy to Provide Material Support to the Designated Foreign Terrorist Organization, Hizballah. The sentence was handed down by United States District Judge Robert H. Cleland.

The information presented to the court at the time of the guilty plea showed that Mahmoud Kourani organized and hosted meetings at his Dearborn residence during Ramadan of 2002. The meetings featured guest speakers from Lebanon, who solicited the participants to make donations to Hizballah. Pursuant to the Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act, effective October 8, 1997, the Secretary of State designated Hizballah as a foreign terrorist organization by finding that the organization is a foreign organization that engages in terrorist

activity threatening the security of United States nationals or the national security of the United States. Hizballah, also known as “Party of God,” also known as “Islamic Jihad,” among other names, is a worldwide terrorist network based in Lebanon which has conducted numerous high profile terrorist attacks in the name of Islamic fundamentalism. The money solicited by Kourani’s conspiracy was intended to support Hizballah’s “orphans of martyrs” program to benefit the families of those killed in Hizballah terrorist operations or by Hizballah’s enemies.

United States Attorney Stephen J. Murphy, commended the work of the Special Agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, who conducted the investigation, and the Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Department of Homeland Security, who originally arrested Kourani in the summer of 2003. The prosecution was handled by Assistant United States Attorney Kenneth R. Chadwell.

“This case underscores the seriousness with which my office, the FBI and the Department of Homeland Security view terrorist fund raising as well as our strong commitment to investigating and prosecuting these types of cases,” said United States Attorney Murphy. “Raising money for Hizballah, or any other designated terrorist organization, is a serious crime which has been, and will continue to be, vigorously pursued in the Eastern District of Michigan.”

Daniel D. Roberts, Special Agent in Charge, Federal Bureau of Investigation, said “This matter represents how effective law enforcement and intelligence agencies can be when combining resources and working together. I join our partner in Immigration Customs Enforcement (ICE) and the United States Attorney’s Office in commending all investigative personnel in their efforts in achieving this exceptional result.”

“This case should send a clear message to those who seek to provide material support to terrorist organizations,” stated SAC Moskowitz. “ICE, as a partner in the Joint Terrorism Task Force will not hesitate to use the nation’s immigration laws or any tool at our disposal in order to keep America safe.”

Kourani has already been ordered deported to Lebanon following service of his sentence.